

“UNTIL HE FIND IT”
NO. 2821

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“Until he find it.”
Luke 15:4

IT was not just anybody who went after the sheep that was lost, it was the person to whom the lost sheep belonged. Our Savior said, “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?” The man was not a hunter, looking after wild game that was not his, in order to make it his by capturing it, but he was a sheep-master, who owned the sheep, going out to find what was already his own property. This is one of the great secrets that explain the care of the good Shepherd, in looking for the lost sheep. He is caring for that which is His own.

He says of them, in His great intercessory prayer to His Father, “Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.” Long ere this world was created, or stars began to shine, even in the eternal ages of the past, God had given to His beloved Son a people who were there and then His by His Father’s gift. In the fullness of time He redeemed them, and so they became doubly His, yet they were His, in plan and purpose, from eternity.

They were, therefore, His when they wandered away from Him, and His while they strayed further and yet further off from Him—yea, they were always His wherever they went. This truth is well put by the writer of the lines we have so often sung—

*“Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine,
Are they not enough for Thee?”
But the Shepherd made answer: ‘This of Mine
Has wandered away from Me;
And although the road is rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find My sheep.’”*

That wandering sheep did not belong to anybody else but that particular sheep-master. If any other man had taken it into his fold, he would have had no right to do so. If anyone had caught it, and slain and eaten it, he would have been a thief, for it was not his sheep. It belonged to the man who owned the other ninety and nine sheep, and it was because it belonged to him that he went after it. He would not have gone to seek another man’s sheep; he sought it because it was his own.

And in like manner, Christ has come into the world to seek His own. He Himself said, “The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep,” and the apostle Paul wrote, “Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.” The main object and design which He had in coming to this earth was to seek His own. His great redemptive work has brought some good to all men, but it was more especially intended for the benefit of the household of faith, as Paul wrote to Timothy, “We trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe.” The great purpose of His coming is in order to seek His own, whom His Father has given to Him, that none of them may be lost at the last.

Remembering this great truth, we shall now consider these four words, “Until he find it.” “Until” is something like a boundary mark set up to indicate a turning point, and we shall first consider *the dark side of this “until,”* and then come over into *the bright side of it.*

I. Looking first on THE DARK SIDE OF THIS “UNTIL,” we will try to answer two questions, first, where is the sheep until the Shepherd finds it? Secondly, where is the Shepherd until He finds it?

First then, *where is the sheep until the Shepherd finds it?* Mark, dear friends, the pronoun in our text, “until *he* find it.” It is the Shepherd who finds the lost sheep. True salvation comes to the sinner by Jesus Christ finding him. You and I, if we are very earnest in seeking the souls of others, may readily find the lost ones, for they are all around us—perhaps in our own families, possibly they nestle even in our bosoms.

We know well enough where the lost ones are, for we cannot walk the streets of London, or the lanes of country villages, without discovering them. If we ask the city missionary where we can find those that are most evidently lost, he will tell us where they live in whole colonies, he knows where any quantity of them may be found.

Now, our finding of them may be a means to an end, but it is only a means. The end must be Christ’s finding them, if they are really to be saved. Otherwise, it will not be of much use for the schoolmaster to find them, though it may do them some good, and be a temporal advantage to them, it will not be much good for the blessings of civilization to find them, or for them to be lifted up out of poverty. All these processes may be useful in their measure, but as far as the eternal salvation of the lost is concerned, it all depends upon Christ finding them.

He, the unique Man, the all-glorious God, must come into contact with them through His Spirit, and claim them as His own, for until that happens, they will remain in the sad, sad state of which I am now going to speak. I like that idea of the Chinese convert, who, when he was applying for baptism and membership at San Francisco, and was asked, “How did you find Jesus?” answered, “I no find Jesus at all, He find me.” It is almost unnecessary to add that he was accepted upon such a testimony.

Where, then, are lost sinners until Christ finds and saves them?

Well first, they are in a very careless state. They are here compared to sheep, partly because of their stupidity, but also because of their aptness to wander. A sheep thinks nothing of wandering, it is sport to him to have his liberty. Perhaps he enjoys himself all the more in being free from the pen, and the fold. The sheep does not think at all about the shepherd seeking him. The shepherd has wide open eyes for the sheep, but the sheep, while he is wandering, has no eye for the shepherd.

The shepherd is pursuing him, hot foot, over hill and dale, but the sheep is carelessly picking what little herbage it is able to find, thinking only of the present, and making itself as happy as it can without a thought of the future. This is still the condition of the great mass of our fellow men. Until Christ finds them, they are thoughtless, careless, indifferent about eternal things.

Oh, that they could but be led to think, for thoughtfulness is oftentimes evidence that He has found them! But they decline to think. “What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed?”—these are the questions that interest them. Their chief concern is, “to kill time,” though, indeed, they have no time to lose—to hurry away the hours which are already far too fleet—this seems to be their principal occupation. Just as the sheep cannot think, and will not think, so neither will the sinner, but he will continue in his carelessness, and indifference, and brutishness, until the Savior finds him.

More than this, the sheep, until it is found by its owner, is very apt to wander further and yet further away, just as sinners go on from one sin to another. It is not the nature of sin to remain in a fixed state. Like decaying fruit, it grows more rotten, the corruption is sure to increase and spread. The man who is bad today will, to a certainty, be worse tomorrow. Every week that he lives he adds some new evil habit to all that he had before until the chain, which at first seemed but a silken cord, becomes at last an adamantine fetter, in which he is held fast so that he cannot escape.

Ah, brethren, it is impossible to say how far men will wander away from God! If restraining grace is not brought to bear upon them, they will certainly go to unutterable lengths of infamy and guilt. Possibly, someone who is here now is wandering further and yet further away.

My friend, let me remind you that you can do, today, what you could not have done seven years ago. You laugh now at things that would have made you shudder then, and language which made your blood run chill when you first left your mother's knee, has now become habitual with you. Ay, and certain tricks in trade, which you oftentimes condemned at the first, have now become your regular practice. Ah, yes! the wandering sheep keeps on straying further and further away, it will not come back to the fold of its own accord, but will continue to wander until the shepherd finds it.

And until then, the sheep is in a sad condition all the while. It dreams of happiness by wandering, but it finds none. A sheep is not a proper animal to run wild, it is unable to take care of itself as a great many wild creatures can do. As corn, which is but educated grass, seems to yield a harvest nowhere but where man sows it, so a sheep seems to be entirely dependent on man. If it would do well, it must be under a shepherd's care.

A sheep running wild is out of its element, it is in a condition in which it cannot flourish or be happy, and a man without God, and without Christ, cannot possibly be blessed. You may think you can do as well without God as with Him, but as soon might a lamp burn without oil, or the lungs heave in life without air—as well might you yourself attempt to live without food as for your soul to truly and really live without God.

The very best of you, if you are without Christ, are simply great ruins, like some dilapidated castle or abbey which you sometimes see, there may be enough of the ancient building remaining to let us guess what it once was, and what it might again be, if the original builder could come back and restore it to its pristine glory, but as it is, it is an utter ruin, and bat and the owl make their home there.

So is it with you if you are without Christ. Your heart is nothing but a cage of unclean birds. Your mind is full of doubts and forebodings, you are often unable to sleep because of your dread of the future, and when you come to die, then will your desolation be most evident, for away from God, you are like a fish out of the water, or like a diver under the water, cut off from the supply of air which is essential to his life. The creature cannot do without the Creator. God can be blessed without us, but we cannot be blessed without Him.

We shall realize that the wandering sheep is in a sad condition if we only think of the loss to itself through its straying away, but there is far more than that involved in its wandering. There is also, the loss to the shepherd. That is the blessed mystery underlying our Savior's words. The main loss was that of the Shepherd, it was that fact that moved Him, as the owner of the lost sheep, to seek after it until He found it. And this made Him rejoice so much when He did find it, for He could not bear the thought of losing it.

To be lost to Christ may, perhaps, seem to some of you who are careless and thoughtless, to be but a trifling matter. If the wandering sheep could have spoken, it might have said, “I do not want to belong to the shepherd. I know that he values me, and that he is seeking me because I am his, but I do not care about that.” No, poor sheep, but if you had been the shepherd, you would have cared, and poor sinner, if you did but know even a little of what Christ feels, you also would begin to care about your own soul.

Oh, it is such joy, such bliss as I cannot describe, for anyone to be able to say, “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.” It brings tears to my eyes even as I repeat those familiar words, and meditate upon their meaning.

What a blessing it is to belong to Jesus! I do not know a sweeter song than this, “My Beloved is mine, and I am his.” To belong to Jesus, to be one of the sheep in His flock, to know that He is my Shepherd, and that I follow Him because I recognize His voice, oh, this is heaven upon earth, this is the beginning of the joy of heaven itself!

I wish all of you knew it, but alas! many of you are like the sheep that was lost to the shepherd. If he counted up the ninety and nine, and rejoiced that they were safe, yet he heaved a sigh as he said, “I have

lost one sheep out of my hundred,” and he could not bear the thought of losing even one of them. In the same way, some of you are, as yet, lost to Christ, and lost to the great Father who is in heaven, and that is very sad.

There was also another sad thing, namely, that the sheep was in constant danger. It was away from its natural protector, it was subject to weariness, and drought, and hunger, and disease, and it was in continual danger from the wolf. It might die for want of care. It would, certainly, at last, perish altogether, and be rent by the foul creatures that would feast upon its carcass.

In like manner, a sinner without a Savior is always in danger—as I have already shown you, in danger of still worse sin, in danger of death, in danger from the devil, in danger of “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” Oh, the terrible danger of every unregenerate man!

If I see a child almost run over in the street, it seems to curdle my blood, does it not have a similar effect upon you? When you see a man knocked down in the road, even though he gets up, and walks away, you feel troubled lest he should be hurt.

Do you feel like that when you think about the souls of men that are in a far more terrible danger—in jeopardy of the wrath of God, which abides upon them even now, and which will abide upon them forever in that dread place of torment, “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched”? Pity the poor sheep until the shepherd finds it, for its condition is most sad, and poor unconverted sinner, we would also pity you until the Savior finds you, for your state is terribly sad too.

Now I turn to the second question—*Where is the Shepherd until He finds the wandering sheep?* Ah, brethren and sisters, you know well enough where He is! He is seeking His sheep which is lost, and He will keep on seeking until He finds it. He is very skillful in following the tracks of the wanderer, just as some shepherds seem to be able to track their sheep almost as a bloodhound will follow a trail.

It is wonderful how Christ follows the track of some people. I have known them go from place to place, yet the good Shepherd has never been far away from them. When they were children, He sought them in the hymns they learned, in their teachers’ earnest admonitions, in their mother’s entreaties and their father’s prayers.

When they became young men and young women, and shook off their former instructors, the good Shepherd still followed them by many a helpful book, and many a holy remembrance which they could not shake off. When they went into business, and neglected the Sabbath, and forsook the house of God, the good Shepherd still tracked them by affliction, by Christian neighbors, by the very sound of the church bell, by the death of old companions, and in a hundred ways.

It may be that some have gone off to America, or Canada, in the hope of escaping from the influences of religion, but it was no use. You remember the backwoodsman who had begun to make a log hut, and had not finished his house before up rode a Methodist minister with his saddlebags, and with an oath the settler said, “Why, I have moved a dozen times to get away from you fellows, and wherever I move to, one of you is sure to come to me.” “Yes,” said the good man, “and wherever you go, you will find us. If you go to heaven, you will find us there, and if you go to hell,” he added, “I am afraid that you will find some Methodist preachers even there. You had better cave in, for we shall always be after you.”

If you are really one of Christ’s sheep, something of this sort will happen to you, and wherever you may wander, you will find Christ is still after you. If you go to the uttermost parts of the earth, He will follow you. If you land at some far distant port, where you think you may indulge without restraint in vice, even there the divine love of Christ will pursue you.

I know one, who now preaches the Gospel, who was on board a ship at Shanghai, and that very night, a prayer meeting was being held in the College on his behalf, as his brother was one of our students, and while they were praying, the Lord struck him down, turned him from his sins almost without any visible instrument, and he returned home, and confessed his faith in Christ. The Lord Jesus is well acquainted with sinners’ tracks, and He will pursue them until He finds them.

Notice what blessed perseverance the good Shepherd manifests, “Until he find it.” There is the wandering sheep, toiling up that steep hill, so up that hill goes the Shepherd. Why does He climb like that? Because the sheep has gone that way, and He must follow it till He finds it. Now it has gone down the other side, and across that green morass where, if a man should slip, he might sink and lose his life. Ay, but the good Shepherd will go after that wandering one till he finds it.

Day after day, from the rising to the setting of the sun, and all through the night, nothing can stay the Shepherd’s feet until He has His sheep that was lost, safe upon His shoulders. How blessed is the perseverance of the Savior that He will not take our rejection as a final refusal, but still gives us fresh proclamations and invitations of grace!

Again and again He sends out His servants to bid the sinner come to the Gospel feast, not only on the Sabbath, but on week days as well, the voice of Wisdom cries aloud, “Turn in hither, and feast upon the bounteous provision of redeeming love.” There are none so persevering as Christ is, “He shall not fail nor be discouraged,” but shall press on in His earnest search for His lost sheep until He finds it.

A man who is seeking lost sheep, must display great wisdom, because it is very difficult to find the tracks of the sheep, and the divine wisdom, which was displayed when some of us were brought to God, will cause us everlasting wonderment. It is a marvelous thing that sometimes a man’s sin, though it looks as though it must damn him, has been part of the very means by which he has obtained salvation.

I knew one, who never recollected having told a lie until, upon a certain occasion, he was caught unawares, and said what was untrue, and then he was covered with such shame and confusion of face that he saw all his boasted self-righteousness melt away, and he went and humbled himself before God, and so found peace and pardon.

Some have allied themselves to evil companions, who seemed likely to lead them further into sin, yet before long, those very companions have been converted, and have been the means of leading them to the Savior. Christ will have His sheep, somehow or other. By hook or by crook, He will lay hold of them, and if they will not be brought in one way, they shall be in another.

Some have been found by Him in the darkest dens of infamy, His all-piercing eyes have been able to see them even there. Some have been won by gentleness and kindness, and others by terror and distress, but in one way or another, with wondrous perseverance, Jesus seeks the lost until He finds them, and He will never give up the search until the last of His wandering sheep is brought back to the fold.

Where is the good Shepherd until He finds His sheep? Why, He is in a state of discontent, with yearning heart and troubled brow. If you say to Him, “Good Shepherd, why did You not go home to Your Father when first the Jews sought to stone You? Why did you not ascend in splendor from amidst the ungodly throng?” He will tell you that He could not give up seeking His sheep till He found them by redemption, and that now He must still continue yearning over sinners until He finds them.

Do you not sympathize with Him in this feeling? If you are a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, you cannot be at ease while souls are being lost. I fear that it would not matter in the least to some professors whether a whole nation was lost or saved. They would be just as comfortable, whatever happened, but they who have the spirit of Christ, and are in sympathy with Him, have bowels of compassion, so that the loss of any one sinner fills them with dismay, and the penitence of any one sinner makes their heart rejoice with exceeding joy. May we always cultivate that spirit!

II. But now I must turn to THE BRIGHT SIDE OF THAT LANDMARK, “UNTIL.”

I am going to ask the same questions as before, but will put the second first, and the first second.

First then, *where is the Shepherd when He finds His sheep?* I can answer this question, for I remember where He was when He found me. The first sight I had of Him was a very vivid one. Where was He then? Well, He was just where I was. The sheep and the Shepherd stood together, but Christ was where I ought to have been by reason of my sin. Christ was accursed because I was cursed by my sin. Christ was made sin because I was a sinner, that I might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Oh, what a sight was that—Christ in my place! I have preached about it many years, yet it always makes me wonder just as it did at the first. What an overwhelming thought it seemed, and yet how full

of joy! O poor soul, if you would have a true sight of Christ, see Him suffering, dying, forsaken of His God, and full of agony because the chastisement of your peace was upon Him!

The Shepherd was also standing over the lost sheep—not merely near it, but looking down upon it. How pleased, how delighted, He was to have found His sheep which was lost! Well do I remember when I saw my Lord looking down upon me with eyes of unspeakable love. I could hardly believe He ever could have loved me so, it seemed to be almost incredible. What could He see in me to love—a poor sheep, with torn fleece, footsore and weary, and not worth the trouble He had taken to find me?

When a queen picks up a pin, it is nothing in comparison with Christ taking me up and caring for me. For some great emperor to fall in love with a milkmaid, may not be anything wonderful, for she may have as sweet a face as ever graced any empress, but as for us sinners, there is no beauty in us that Christ should desire us! By nature, we were full of defilement, and by practice too, we became even worse, yet Jesus loved us, and as a shepherd rejoices over the wandering sheep that he finds, and brings home, or as a father rejoices over his lost child whom he has found, or as a young man rejoices over his bride, so did the Lord Jesus rejoice over us when He found us.

*“And all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There arose a cry to the gate of heaven,
‘Rejoice! I have found My sheep!’
And the angels echoed around the throne,
‘Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own!’”*

We also saw Him, at that time, as bearing the marks of the toil and travail which He had endured on our behalf. There are the tokens, on the shepherd’s face, and on the shepherd’s hands, and on the shepherd’s garments, of the rough way that he has trodden. If the sheep could but know, it might read, in the very look of him, the price that he had to pay for its recovery, and so, dear friends, was it with us when Jesus saved us.

We looked up, and saw Him with His face bestained with the spittle of men, His head encircled by the crown of thorns, His body covered with the bloody sweat, and His hands, and feet, and side all pierced, and as we looked, we loved Him because He had first loved us, and loved us so wondrously.

One thing more about the good Shepherd when He found the lost sheep, He was grasping it, for I guarantee you that there was not a moment between His getting near it and His grasping it. “No, no,” He seemed to say, “you will not get away from me again, I have caught you, and I will hold you fast.”

Do we not remember the grip that He gave us when He first found us? We were apprehended by Him whom we now have apprehended, we were held fast by Him whom now we hold fast by faith and love. We felt then as if a strange power had seized us—not that we resisted it, for we rejoiced in it, we were led, with full consent, against our own will—that is, against our old will, but with a new will, which we felt put within us by that blessed hand which had laid hold of us, and which would not let us go.

But *where was the sheep when the good Shepherd found it?* Why there was but an instant, and the sheep was on the shoulders of the Shepherd, and what does that indicate but that when Christ finds me, then He bears me, and all that is upon me, upon His shoulders—all my diseases, and all my sin, and all my sorrows, are laid upon Him. We rightly sing—

“I lay my sins on Jesus;”

but I think we ought also to sing—

“I lay myself on Jesus.”

All that I am, and all that I have, all is there. Of Benjamin, Moses said, “The LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.” That is where we are, between the shoulders of the Divine Shepherd of souls, Christ underneath us bearing all our weight—the weight of sin, the weight of sorrow, and doubt, and fear, and care, and whatever else there may be upon us.

What about the sheep now? Well, it is resting—not as it will rest, by and by, when it will lie in the Shepherd’s bosom in yet sweeter fellowship, but even now it is resting, it has not to carry itself back to the fold. It is a long way, but neither the Shepherd nor the sheep will get weary. It is a toilsome way, full of dangers, but those toils and dangers are for the Shepherd rather than for the sheep. We are right in singing—

“Safe in the arms of Jesus,”

for now that He has found us, we are under His protection. No wolf can come near us now, or if he did, he would be quite unable to hurt us. The sheep that is found is perfectly secure in the good Shepherd’s grip. It could not stray away even if it would, if it struggled to get free, He would grip it all the more firmly. So, beloved, it was with us, when Christ took us on His shoulders, He held us fast, and He will not let us go.

On whose shoulders was the sheep? It was on the shoulders of the rejoicing one who had found it, and you and I belong to the Christ who is glad to find us. I wonder which was the happier of the two, in the feast, when the younger son came home—the son or the father? I think the father was, and certainly, of the shepherd and the sheep, the shepherd was the happier, and yet the sheep, in being found, must have participated in the shepherd’s joy.

Do you not remember how, when you were saved, you nestled down under the wings of the Eternal? I love to see the little chicks beneath the feathers of the hen, peeping out with such sweet contentment, and a sense of perfect security, expressed in their twinkling eyes. Had they been away from their mother’s wings, they would have been affrighted, but under their mother’s protection, they did not seem at all alarmed.

So have I cowered down beneath the wings of God, trusting to that blessed promise, “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.” O beloved, it is a blessed thing to know that we are held in the grip of a strong Christ, with great joy in His heart which is the proof of the value that He sets upon us, and the love which He bears towards us!

So you see that there is a great deal in these four words, “until he find it.” Where are you now, my friend? Are you still lost? What a joy it is to think that the good Shepherd is still seeking lost sheep! But if you have seen Christ near you, oh, that you may, by His grace, this very hour, be caught up by His pierced hand, and laid upon His everlasting shoulders, and so be carried to the heavenly fold! The Lord grant it!

This is what you need, and what you must have if you are really to be saved. You must be “saved in the Lord,” Christ Jesus must save you, it must be by His blessed hand and His almighty power that you must be rescued from danger, and saved from going down to the pit. May He soon find all of you who are lost, and carry you on His shoulders all the way to the eternal fold above, for His dear names sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 17

Verse 1. *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come;*

That tremendous hour which was the very hinge of history—that hour in which He must suffer, and bleed, and die, to pay the ransom price for His people, “Father, the hour is come;”—

1. *Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

In the endurance of the cross, there was a mutual glorification. It was the time of the Savior’s humiliation, and yet, in a certain sense, He was never so glorious as when He died upon the tree. Then, too, He glorified His Father, vindicating divine justice, and manifesting divine love.

2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

Christ, by His death, had power given Him over all flesh—that is the universal aspect of it, but there was a special purpose hidden within it, “that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Do you really know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, His Son? Have you been brought into such familiar acquaintance with God as to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior? Then you have eternal life, and you may rejoice that you have a life like that of God Himself, which can never die.

4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

What a blessed thing that our Savior was able to say this just before His death! Oh, that you and I may be able to utter some humble echo of this speech when we come to the end of our lives! This is indeed a life worth living.

5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

“Take me up from earth again, re-clothe Me with that glory which, for a while, I have laid aside.”

6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

What high praise this was of Christ’s disciples! “They have kept thy word.” Poor creatures that they were, they often turned aside from the right path. They were oftentimes very ignorant, and very willful, yet the Lord knew that their hearts were right towards Him, and that they willed to learn, and desired to believe. So He saw in them what was often hidden, even from themselves, and He testified to His Father, “They have kept thy word.”

7-8. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me;

Every preacher of the Gospel should see to it that this is true concerning himself. When we pass on to the people the words which God has given to us, we supply them with real spiritual food, and so we glorify God, but if we only give them our own words, we do but mock their hunger, and we dishonor God. Our blessed Master, though quite able to speak His own original thoughts, kept to the words of His Father, let us be careful to imitate His example.

8-9. And they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

There was a speciality in Christ’s prayer now that He was nearing the end of His earthly life. He concentrated His intercessions upon the chosen people for whom He was about to shed His blood.

10-11. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.

The disciples were going to be left alone, and Christ’s tender heart made Him lessen the pain of the separation by offering this great petition on their behalf.

11. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

This was as though He had said, “Thou hast given them to Me, My Father, to become My bride; and now I am about to die, and return to Thee, I give back this bride of Mine into Thy charge. Take care of her, I pray Thee, till I can come back again, and receive her unto Myself.” There is such holy unity

between these Divine Persons of the Godhead that the Father first gives the elect to Christ, and then Christ commits the elect into the Father’s keeping.

12-13. *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

Are you dull and sad today? Does anything depress your spirits? It is not according to your Savior’s mind that you should be unhappy, it is His will and purpose that His joy should be fulfilled in you. Ask for a sip from His cup of joy at this moment, one drop of His joy will make the dullest to be bright, and the saddest to be glad.

14. *I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

He was a stranger here, and His people are also strangers and foreigners. We are not so much to be unworldly as to be other-worldly. We belong to another world, to another kingdom, even the kingdom of heaven.

15. *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

“Keep them in the world to battle with the evil, make them the salt that prevents putrefaction, and let them not lose their savor, let them not be contaminated by the evil in the midst of which they dwell.”

16-17. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

It looks as though our Lord almost anticipated that question of Pilate, “What is truth?” Here is His answer, “Thy word is truth.”

18. *As thou have sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*

Christ was the sent One, and every Christian is also sent. All believers should be missionaries, sent forth upon a mission to bless the sons of men.

19-20. *And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

Christ knew that His church would grow. He did not merely pray for the little handful of disciples who were with Him there, but He prayed for all who, in after years, would believe on Him.

21. *That they all may be one;*

That is the great prayer of Christ. There are not two churches, but one church. Christ is not the Head of two bodies, He has but one mystical body. There is but one Bridegroom, and there is but one bride—that bride is His indivisible church. Hence His prayer, “That they all may be one;”—

21. *As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

Can the world believe in Christ till His church becomes more manifestly one? I fear not, so let us each one aim at the true unity of the one church of Jesus Christ. There are some who aim at this by separating themselves from everybody else, but I do not see how they promote unity in that way, I clearly and painfully see how they increase divisions and multiply strife wherever they go. But let us, beloved, to the utmost of our power, promote the unity of the body of Christ.

22-23. *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me,—*

Do you understand this wonderful union? Jesus Christ in you, “I in them,” and then the Father in Christ, “and thou in me,”—

23. *That they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

This is a wonderful truth—that the Father loves the church even as He loves Jesus Christ His Son. When shall the world ever know this till the unity of the church is more clearly seen?

24-26. *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*

Oh, for a blessed fulfillment of that prayer in our experience this very moment, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—410, 377

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